

parallel exit slits (24). However, Figure 6 is a specific embodiment of the single slit (24) of Gibbon, which shows a serrated die, in which a tape to be fibrillated is extruded to produce a striated tape (column 9, lines 15-18). The Examiner relies on Figure 9 therein as displaying “the exit port.” However, Figure 9 does not represent an exit port, let alone a plurality of exit ports as required by the claims. Rather, Figure 9 represents a tape with a flat, essentially rectangular cross-section obtained by the use of a rectangular slit die with the contoured polymer entry of Gibbon’s invention (column 13, lines 21-23). Contrary to the finding by the Examiner, Gibbon does **not** disclose, let alone suggest, an extrusion die comprising a pair of parallel exit slits and a plurality of exit ports located between said pair of parallel exit slits and evenly spaced along a line parallel to said pair of parallel exit slits, as recited in Claim 9.

For all the above reasons, it is respectfully requested that the rejection over Gibbon be withdrawn.

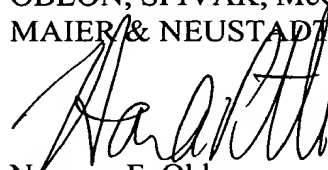
Applicants respectfully call the Examiner’s attention to the Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) filed May 15, 2001 (with the filing of this application). The Examiner is respectfully requested to initial the Form PTO 1449 submitted therewith, and include a copy thereof with the next Office communication.

Moreover, since the date of the IDS is before the date of the Office Action and thus technically was part of the Official file as of the Office Action date, Applicants respectfully request that should the Examiner determine that a new ground of rejection needs to be made in the next Office Action relying in whole or in part on any of the references cited in the IDS, then said next Office Action not be made Final, even if the new rejection was necessitated by the present amendment to the claims.

All of the presently pending claims in this application are now believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 10 (New).